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The Field.

Forest Culture.

At the late National Agricultural Congress, held at St. Louis, Missouri, the committee on forest culture made the following report. It is of interest, as veryfying the experience of many practical men, who have given this subject much study.

The forests of the continent are rapidly passing away. Large districts in the Atlantic States are already stripped of their most valuable timber. In less than twenty-five years the accessible forests in the region of the lakes, on the upper waters of the Mississippi, and in the British Possessions adjacent, will be exhausted. The industrial progress of the Southern States is consuming the trees, both desiduous and evergreen, at an accelerated rate. In the Rocky Mountain regions (where the hard woods are unknown), the pines, spruces and cedars are disappearing before the farmer, the miner, the architect and the railroad builder. On the Pacific coast, the immense home demand, ever increasing, together with the exportation to England, France, Australia, China, Japan, South America, Mexico, and the Pacific Islands, foretell the exhaustion of the California timber trees in twenty years; and those available in Oregon and regions northward, in a brief period.

The demand for the products of the forest constantly increases. The supply constantly, and in a growing ratio, diminishes, and prices constantly augment. The causes now in operation, and daily gaining strength, can have but one effect, that of exhausting all of the available sources of supply within the lives of persons now in existance

This appalling prospect, the view of which becomes the more vivid the more it is studied, should arouse the farmers, land owners and legislators. It is vital to the future welfare of our people that the reproduction of our forests should at once begin, not on a small scale or in a few localities, but in large measures and co-extensive with our settlements. A broad statesmanship, in the National and State Legislature, should at once take up the subject, and deal with it year by year, until the great work shall be adequately begun.

The few and hesitating experiments in isolated localities, which have been made in the growing of forest trees, have no significance so far as the general supply of future wants is concerned. But they are of inestimable value, in so far as they teach the ease and comparative rapidity with which forest trees, useful to the farm, to the work-shop and to the railroad, may be produced; and in so far as they show that the agricultural men of the country have already (in advance of the men in high political life) appreciated the necessities of the present and the future. They are also of value in demonstrating that, however remote the profits of forest culture may have been heretofore considered, it is yet true that the artificial plantation may in a very few years, by judicious planting at first, be made to yield current returns equal to the cost of planting and care.

Modification and amelorations of climate, due to the destruction or the extension of forests, have begun to enlist serious consideration. There can be no doubt of the beneficial influence of forest areas equal in aggregate to one-third or one-forth of the entire area of any extensive region. But, however important climate effects may be in this connection - however desirable it may be that the crops and animal life of the farm should enjoy the benefits of forest influences and shelter, the need of extensive forest planting is imperitive enough without taking into consideration its effect on atmospheric movements, temperature, or rainfall. The store, the dwelling, the wharf, the warehouse—all these, and more, demand action, demand it in the name of domestic life, of farm economy, of commerce, of all the arts of our civilization. What we shall save in climate by preserving forest areas, or gain by their extension, is just as much to be enjoyed in addition to other compensations. The less violent sweep of the winds in Illinois, as compared with forty or fifty years ago, due to the obstruction caused by buildings, hedges, fences, orchards, artificial groves, and wind breaks on the prairies, speak to the understanding of plain men more forcibly than any language we could use.

There may be those who regard forest planting as a work of mystery and grandeur, beyond the reach of the common farmer. This is a mistaken view. Nearly all the most important deciduous trees may be grown from the seed as readily as Indian corn. Of many species the seed may be sown broadcast and harrowed in, if the planter prefers to use the seed lavishly rather than give more care. The seeds of many trees may be planted either in the fall or spring as may be most convenient. Some of the softer wooded trees grow from cuttings as readily as the grape; and with most deciduous trees, the seeds or cuttings may, if desired, be at once planted where the trees are to stand. Nor need the most unlettered farmer deny himself the pleasure and profit of the conifers and evergreens. The plants, furnished at prices which are insignificant in comparison with their value, are abundant at reliable nurseries, and with the simple precaution of keeping the roots moist, and proper care in planting, are as sure to grew as any other tree or shrub.

No part of the earth is blessed with a greater variety of useful trees, both of the hard and soft wooded kinds, than the United States; and these native trees can all be readily grown in artificial plantations. It is not alone the pines and spruces and cedars that make up our valuable timber. The harder wooded trees—the ash, the oaks, the hickories, the maples, the walnuts, and the chestnuts—of which we have heretofore been so lavish, have a value in the arts that no figures can estimate. They may be said to be essential to the continuance of our present civilization. New forests of these trees must be grown, or our grand-children must depart from our modes of life. West of longitude